

Field
An Installation by
Antony Gormley

gallery
One



Field: An Installation by Antony Gormley

February 13 - April 11, 1993

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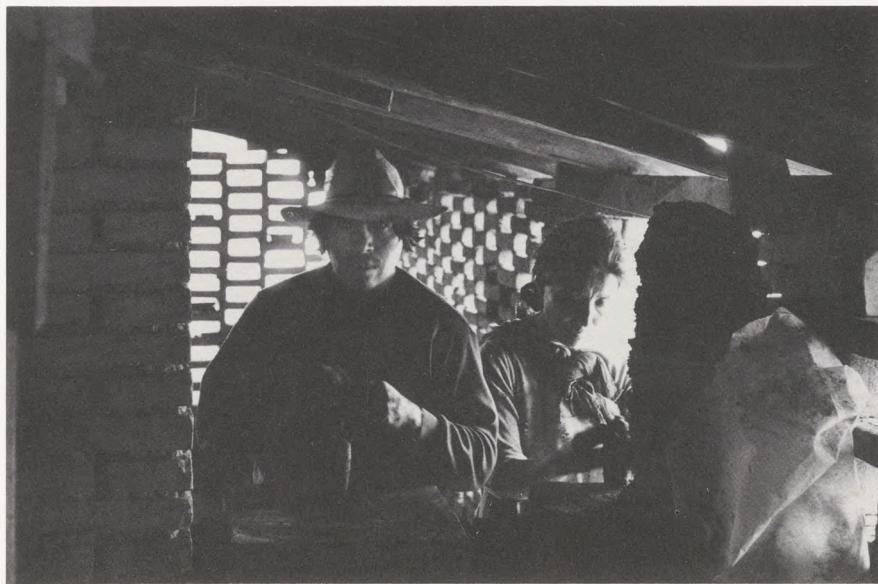
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The Corcoran Gallery of Art
500 Seventeenth Street, NW
Washington, DC 20006-4899

gallery one

The Making of "Field"

These photographs are a record of the Texca family with whom I worked during the first three weeks of December 1990, in the Parish of San Matias, Cholula. Without their energy and generosity, this exhibition would not have happened. There are large numbers of brick-makers in the area of Mexico (population 100,000) working in family units out-of-doors and in open-walled buildings called "gallerias". They understood working in large numbers of units, but this project was not such mechanical labor. Each person found his or her own way of working and their own form for the work. There were few instructions—to make the pieces hand-sized and easy to hold—to make sure the eyes were deep and close—and to try to get the proportions of the head to the body as it should be (in general there was a tendency to make the heads larger).



Petra Mendez de Texca, Seperino Texca



Matias Texca Sanchez

It was extraordinary how confidence grew from tentative and primitive beginnings to a growing familiarity in the rhythms of this work. The procedure was kneading a ball of clay that felt good in the hand, moulding the body quickly between the palms, pulling up the head, pushing in a sharp point to form the eyes (at first with a nail, then as days passed a wetted, sharpened ice-lolly stick seemed preferable). The pieces were allowed to dry a while on their backs and finally stood up, checking that the heads looked up. The process of finding a way of working was not without tension. I had wanted us to work together but because of the geography and the independence of parts of the family it became easier to work in two places—a certain rivalry came into it, a certain pride in having made "better" or more work than the cousins. There were some who rejected the idea that the figures should be laid down for a while and stood them up straight away, which means they are either more portly or thinner in sections. There were others who liked their figures to be taller and would leave them laying overnight to stand them the next day. The rhythm of work went through good and bad days—sometimes when the feeling was there, it was wonderful—with everyone enjoying being and working together and the children reluctant to go to school. Sometimes it was difficult—like after the fiesta of Our Lady of Guadalupe on December 12th, when the family was reluctant to shed the holiday atmosphere and go on with the work.

There was some interest in the growing field of figures outside the "galleria" and some speculation as to what it was. I explained that what I hoped for was to make an image of the people yet to be born—of a future made of the earth. I think they liked the idea of the men and women of the future.

The pieces were oil-fired in three kilns—by interweaving them with layers of bricks and tiles. The firing lasted 24 hours. The color of the individual pieces reflects their position in the kiln—the ones nearer the flame being darker—those to the top and sides being lighter—the majority being a rich red. The clay comes from the valley floor a few miles to the southwest of San Matias.

I went to Mexico hoping to find people who would work with clay in a natural way—I found that and much more. The work conveys this better than words.

I would like to thank Don Marcelino Texca, Doña Pascuala Sanchez de Texca, Don Isaac Texca Sanchez, Matias Texca Sanchez, Gabriella Texca Sanchez, Don Pascual Martinez Rojas, Lidia Texca de Martinez and all their families and friends that helped with the project. Special thanks should also go to Marcella Ramirez of the British Council and Gabriel Orozoo, sculptor, without whose unflagging support this work would never have seen the light of day. The sponsorship of the Calli Quesacoatl Hotel, Cholula is gratefully acknowledged.

London, January 1991



Tomas Texca Sanchez, Angela Rueda de Texca, Enrique Texca Rueda,
Monica Texca Rueda, Mariana Texca Rueda, Tomasito Texca Rueda



Field, 1991, terracotta.

Artist's Statement

A lot of my work is completed by others, part of its potential comes "through" people—in this work in particular. Of course, there was a vast range of response—for some of my collaborators the whole thing was a game; for others, a task not dissimilar from making tortillas; for others, like Santiago and Tomas, it was something else. The work became a kind of pool that could contain boredom and inspiration. What started as work, turned quite quickly into a kind of self-generating energy in which people could celebrate their differences. For some it was difficult at first to accept that differences were tolerable—a brick is judged by its conformity to a standard. What we were doing was each finding our own way of making a hand-sized equivalent for the individual body as fast as possible, but at the same time we were contributing to this image of the collective body.

It has taken me a while to realize that life itself can be the subject *and* generating principle of art. I feel now that the rational mind, mine included, has evolved into an instrument of abuse and control. The return of the body is a necessary realignment—the return to the earth as material comes from the same impulse. The rational mind seems to edit and put a use value on the totality of the psyche. The relations between the "developed" and the "other" world mirror this. I am sure that art can recover a feeling of the wholeness of consciousness. The self-referential ideal for art was a mistake as was the postmodernist obsession with language. Art can be common, recognizable, and human, but by also being iconic and synthetic, catalyze an inner reflective response. Art has to deal with human situations; personal, political, and social—within them it can open up a space for reorientation. The political potential of art is that it recognizes the value of individual growth—what Beuys called 'creative capital'—*and this has nothing to do with economics*. The only revolution that is going to work is an interior one.

India helped me value "being" itself—not thinking and doing, just being. By focusing the attention on the body through Vipassana meditation (which I studied on and off for two or three years), I experienced consciousness at the center of a transitive field of energy in which the "me" of the ordering mind was expelled. In the lead work I have concentrated on the skin—the surface where substance gives way to appearance. The lead acts as a transforming membrane that dematerializes the body. The potential within this place of the body is expressed sometimes as visible darkness, sometimes as pressure, sometimes as emanation or extension.

The lead works are all concerned with dematerialization, now I want to work with the earth to create places of feeling. I would like to grow rather than be made—sometimes I lose faith and the will intervenes. The female aspect of the work is where the faith in growth comes from. The challenge for contemporary art is to engage with the contemporary world without adding to the noise. I would like the work to make eloquent stillness and silence and to let us make contact with our whole selves so that we can take our place within the persistent phenomena of light, space, and nature.

⁸"Antony Gormley," interview with Jane Hart, *Journal of Contemporary Art*, Vol. 4, No. 2, Fall/Winter, 1991. Reprinted with permission.

Antony Gormley

Antony Gormley was born in London, England in 1950. He attended Trinity Hall, Cambridge University (1968-70); Central School of Art and Design (1973-74); Goldsmiths' College, University of London (1975-77); and Slade School of Fine Art, London (1977-79). He lives and works in London.

Selected solo exhibitions

1981 Serpentine Gallery, London
Whitechapel Art Gallery, London

1983 Coracle Press, London

1984 Salvatore Ala Gallery, New York
Riverside Studios, Hammersmith/Chapter,
Cardiff, Wales

1985 "Drawings 1981-1985," Salvatore Ala Gallery,
New York (catalogue)
Städtisches Galerie, Regensburg, Germany and
Frankfurter Kunstverein, Frankfurt (catalogue)
Galerie Wittenbrink, Munich
Galleria Salvatore Ala, Milan

1986 Salvatore Ala Gallery, New York
"Drawings," Victoria Miro Gallery, London

1987 "Man Made Man," La Crie Halle d'Art
Contemporain, Rennes, France
"Drawings," Siebu Contemporary Art Gallery,
Tokyo (catalogue)
"Vehicle," Salvatore Ala Gallery, New York
Gallerie Hufkens de Lathuy, Brussels
"Five Works," Serpentine Gallery, London
(catalogue)

1988 Burnett Miller Gallery, Los Angeles
Contemporary Sculpture Center, Tokyo
(catalogue)
"The Holbeck Sculpture," Leeds City Art Gallery,
Leeds, England

1989 "A Field for the Art Gallery of New South Wales,
A Room for the Great Australian Desert," Art
Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney, Australia
(catalogue)
Louisiana Museum of Modern Art, Humlebaek,
Denmark (catalogue)
Salvatore Ala Gallery, New York
Scottish National Gallery of Modern Art,
Edinburgh, Scotland
"Drawings for Australia," MacQuarie Gallery,
Sydney, Australia

1990 "Baring Light," Burnett Miller Gallery, Los Angeles

1991 "Field," Salvatore Ala Gallery, New York,
traveled to: Centro Cultural/Arte
Contemporaneo, Mexico City (1992); Musuem
of Contemporary Art, San Diego, La Jolla,
California (1992); Corcoran Gallery of Art,
Washington, D.C. (1993) (catalogue)
"Antony Gormley: Field and Other Figures,"
Modern Art Museum of Fort Worth, Texas
"Antony Gormley," Galerie Nordenhake, Sweden
"Drawings and Etchings," Frith Street Gallery,
London
Galerie Christine et Isy Brachot, Brussels

1992 Burnett Miller Gallery, Los Angeles

1993 Contemporary Sculpture Center, Tokyo (catalogue)

Selected group exhibitions

1981 "Hayward Annual: British Drawing," Hayward
Gallery, London

"Aperto '82," Bienale de Venezia, Venice

"British Sculpture in the 20th Century,"
Whitechapel Art Gallery, London

"Objects and Sculpture," Institute of
Contemporary Art, London, and Arnolfini
Gallery, Bristol, England

1982 "Figures and Objects," John Hansard Gallery,
London

"Objects and Figures," Fruitmarket Gallery,
Edinburgh, Scotland

"Whitechapel Open," Whitechapel Art Gallery,
London

1983 "Assemble Here: Some New English Sculpture,"
Puck Building, New York

"Portland Clifftop Sculpture," Camden Arts
Centre, London

"Transformations: New Sculpture from Britain,"
XVII Bienale de São Paulo; Museu de Arte
Moderna, Rio de Janeiro; Museo de Arte
Moderno, Mexico City; Fundação Calouste
Gulbenkian, Lisbon

"New Art," Tate Gallery, London

"Views and Horizons," Yorkshire Sculpture
Garden, Bretton Hall, Yorkshire, England

"The Sculpture Show," Hayward and Serpentine
Galleries, London

1984 "An International Survey of Recent Painting and
Sculpture," The Museum of Modern Art,
New York

"1984," Camden Arts Center, London

1985 "Walking and Falling," Plymouth Arts Centre,
Kettle's Yard, Cambridge and Interim Art,
London (catalogue)
"Anniottanta," organized by the Galleria
Comunale d'Arte Moderna, Bologna
(Biblioteca Comunale Classense,
Ravenna Section)
"The British Show," Art Gallery of Western
Australia; Art Gallery of New South Wales;
Queensland Art Gallery, Australia; and
National Art Gallery, Wellington, New Zealand

"Metaphor and/or Symbol," National Gallery of
Modern Art, Tokyo and National Museum of
Art, Osaka, Japan

"Three British Sculptors," Neuburger Museum,
State University of New York, Purchase,
New York

"Figurative Sculpture," Susanne Hilberry
Gallery, Birmingham, Michigan

1986 "The Generic Figure," Corcoran Gallery of Art,
Washington, D.C. (catalogue)
"Art and Alchemy," Venice Biennale, Italy
"Prospect '86," Frankfurter Kunstverein,
Frankfurt
"Between Object and Image," Ministerio de
Cultura and the British Council, Palacio de
Velasquez, Parque del Retiro, Madrid,
Barcelona, and Bilbao, Spain (catalogue)
"Vom Zeichnen: Aspekte der Zeichnung,"
Frankfurter Kunstverein, Frankfurt; Kasseler
Kunstverein, Kassel, Germany; and Museum
Moderner Kunst, Vienna

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1987 "Viewpoint," Musées Royaux des Beaux-arts de Belgique, Brussels
"Documenta 8," Kassel, Germany (catalogue)
"Avant-Garde in the Eighties," Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Los Angeles (catalogue)
"The Reemergent Figure," Storm King Art Center, Mountainville, New York (catalogue)
"State of the Art," Institute of Contemporary Art, London
"Chaos and Order in the Soul," University Psychiatric Clinic, Mainz, Germany (catalogue)

1988 "British Now: Sculpture et autres Dessins," Musée d'Art Contemporain de Montreal, Montreal (catalogue)
"The Impossible Self," Winnipeg Art Gallery and Vancouver Art Gallery, Canada (catalogue)
"Made to Measure," Kettle's Yard, Cambridge, England (catalogue)
"Starlit Waters: British Sculpture, An International Art 1968-1988," Tate Gallery, Liverpool, England (catalogue)

1989 "Visualizations on Paper: Drawing as a Primary Medium," Germans van Eck Gallery, New York
"It's a Still Life," Arts Council Collection, The South Bank Centre, London (catalogue)
Anders Tornberg Gallery, Malmö, Sweden

1990 "Contemporary British Sculptors-Studies on Paper," Connaught Brown, London
The House of the Artist, Kiev; The Central House of the Artist, Moscow, USSR
"Before Sculpture-Sculptor's Drawings," New York Studio School, New York

1991 "Places with a Past: New Site-Specific Art in Charleston," Spoleto Festival U.S.A., Charleston, South Carolina (catalogue)
"La Troisième Biennale de Sculpture de Monte Carlo," Monaco

1992 "Images of Man: Figures of Contemporary Sculpture (1970-1990)," Isetan Museum, Tokyo; Daimaru Museum, Umeda, Osaka; Hiroshima City Museum of Contemporary Art, Hiroshima, Japan (catalogue)

Archer, Michael, "State of the Art," *Artforum*, Summer 1987.
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Bush, Martin, *Figures of Contemporary Sculpture (1970-1990): Images of Man*, (exh. cat., Isetan Museum of Art, Tokyo, 1992).
Calvocoressi, Richard, *Antony Gormley*, (exh. cat., Louisiana Museum of Modern Art, Humlebaek, Denmark, 1989).
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Ferguson, Bruce W. and Sandy Nairne, *The Impossible Self*, (exh. cat., Winnipeg Art Gallery, Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada, 1988).
Fox, Howard N., *Avant-Garde in the Eighties*, (exh. cat., Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Los Angeles, 1987).
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Malbert, Roger, *It's a Still Life*, (exh. cat., Arts Council Collection, The South Bank Board, London, 1989).
Marchland, Sandra Grand, *British Now: Sculpture et autre Dessins*, (exh. cat., Musée d'Art Contemporain de Montreal, Montreal, Canada, 1988).

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Pokorny, Rita, "Using the Body as if it was a Face," *Neue Kunst in Europe*, No. 9, Summer 1985.

Reeves, Jennifer W., "Cast in the Sculptor's Own Mold," *Christian Science Monitor*, August 14, 1989.

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